

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 00276 081746Z

67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7075

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 00276

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MASS, UK, EG

SUBJECT: BRITISH ARMS FOR EGYPT

SUMMARY. SENSATIONALIST PRESS ARTICLE ON SWINGFIRE
ANTI-TANK MISSILES, LYNX HELICOPTERS, AND HAWK TRAINER-
STRIKE AIRCRAFT FOR EGYPT CAN BE EXPECTED TO RAISE
DOMESTIC FLAK IN UK, BUT IS NOTHING NEW TO USG (OR, WE
THINK, TO THE ISRAELIS). END SUMMARY

1. SENSATIONALIST DAILY EXPRESS WRITER CHAPMAN PINCHER
(WHO IS RESPECTED, HOWEVER, FOR FREQUENT ACCURACY) HAS
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PAGE 02 LONDON 00276 081746Z

ARTICLE JANUARY 8 ON FORTHCOMING BRITISH ARMS SALES TO

EGYPT. HE SAYS DEALS ARE SCHEDULED TO BE ANNOUNCED THIS MONTH AND NOTES THEY WILL COME UNDER "FIERCE ATTACK FROM JEWISH MP'S" BECAUSE THEY INVOLVE "OFFENSIVE ARMS" WHICH COULD BE USED AGAINST ISRAEL, AND AGREEMENTS TO HELP EGYPT SET UP ITS OWN AIRCRAFT AND ARMS INDUSTRIES. PINCHER LISTS BRITISH AIRCRAFT CORPORATION'S SWINGFIRE ANTI-TANK MISSILE, WESTLAND LYNX "ATTACK" HELICOPTER (TO BE ALSO EQUIPPED WITH BAC'S HAWKS-WING ANTI-TANK MISSILE), AND HAWKER-SIDDELEY HAWK TRAINER-STRIKE AIRCRAFT. GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY IS SUPPLYING RADARS.

2. PINCHER SAYS SALES WERE ORIGINALLY TO BE RESTRICTED TO DEFENSIVE WEAPONS BUT HMG HAS NOW DECIDED IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DRAW THE LINE BETWEEN OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE ARMS IN A TANK BATTLE.

3. EGYPT IS BUYING BRITISH ARMS, SAYS PINCHER, PARTLY BECAUSE THEY ARE BEST VALUE ON THE MARKET BUT ALSO BECAUSE SAUDI ARABIA'S KING FAISAL, WHO IS PUTTING UP THE MONEY, HAS REFUSED TO SUPPLY MONEY FOR NEW SOVIET WEAPONS AND IS TOTALLY OPPOSED TO ANY NEW INFUX OF RUSSIAN TECHNICIANS INTO EGYPT.

4. PINCHER ADDS THAT WESTLANDS HAS ALREADY MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO BUILD AND EQUIP A HELICOPTER FACTORY IN EGYPT AND WILL SUPPLY THE TECHNICIANS. HAWKER SIDDELEY IS PREPARED TO DO THE SAME FOR HAWK TRAINER.

5. FCO EGYPTIAN DESK OFFICER CONFIRMS THAT THESE DEALS (ABOUT WHICH DEPARTMENT WAS INFORMED AT HIGH LEVEL OVER A YEAR AGO, AND WHICH HAVE APPEARED PERIODICALLY IN EMBASSY LONDON'S REPORTING) ARE IN NEGOTIATION. HE IS NOT AS SURE AS PINCHER SOUNDS ABOUT CULMINATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF DEALS VERY SOON. ALSO NOT SURE IF THEY INVOLVE CREDIT. HE EXPECTS FLAK FROM DOMESTIC AND ISRAELI SOURCES AS RESULT OF THE PINCHER ARTICLE, EVEN THOUGH ISRAELIS KNOW SUCH DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN GOING ON. SPIERS

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